

Message Text

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60

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-14 ISO-00 SAJ-01 NIC-01 DRC-01

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

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R 201357Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9877

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO UNN

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA UNN

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USUN NEW YORK 477

DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2562

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: INSTITUTIONAL HIGHJACKING BY THE LEFT

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REF: LISBON 1793

SUMMARY: GOP HAS STIFFENED ITS RESISTENCE TO TAKE OVER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS BY THE SO-CALLED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, BUT CONFLICT IS BY NO MEANS RESOLVED. END SUMMARY.

1. SHORTLY AFTER APRIL 25 COUP, ELEMENTS ACTING UNDER THE BANNER OF COMMUNIST-DOMINATED "DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL COMMISSION" (CDE)-WHICH IN SOME PARTS OF COUNTRY HAS CHANGED NAME TO "PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT" (MDP) BEGAN TAKING OVER PARIS BOARDS (LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES AND VOTER REGISTRATION CENTERS) AND TOWN COUNCILS (LARGER LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES WITH OWN BUDGETS AND PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENTS). IN SOME CASE CDE INVITED POPULATION TO MEET IN PUBLIC SQUARE TO DISCUSS "HOUSECLEANING" OF BOARD OR COUNCIL AND ORCHESTRATED BOTH DISCUSSION AND SUBSEQUENT "ELECTION" OF THEIR HANDPICKED SLATE TO REPLACE EXISTING OFFICIALS. CDE THEN PROCLAIMED ITSELF NEW LOCAL AUTHORITY AND TOOK OVER PREMISES INVOLVED. THIS METHOD, WITH VARIATIONS ON THE THEME, HAS BEEN USED BY CDE TO GET CONTROL OF PERHAPS AS MANY AS 1/3 OF PORTUGAL'S 304 TOWN COUNCILS, AND AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF PARISH BOARDS.

2. MINISTRY OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, HEADED BY LIBERAL LAWYER MAGALHAES MOTA, ONE OF FOUNDERS OF CENTER PARTY PPD, AGREED TO VERIFY CREDENTIALS OF LOCAL OFFICIALS SELECTED BY CDE IN SOME CASES AT FIRST, BUT HAS SINCE BACKED OFF. IN SOME RECENT CASES, MINISTER HAS ACCEPTED ONLY SOME OF CDE "OFFICIALS" AND COMPLETED REST OF SLATE ON HIS OWN, WHICH HE IS EMPOWERED TO DO UNDER PUBLIC DECREE LAW. IN OTHER CASES MINISTER HAS SIMPLY IGNORED CDE RECOMMENDATIONS, LEAVING INCUMBENT LOCAL OFFICIALS IN PLACE.

3. ON JUNE 14, MINISTER REVEALED HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT CDE TAKEOVER OF GOVERNMENT OF NORTHERN CITY OF VILA REAL. CDE THERE PROMPTLY DEMANDED HIS RESIGNATION. IN SUBSEQUENT FLURRY OF COMMUNIQUE, CDE AT VILA REAL AND NATIONAL CDE CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFENDED CDE TAKEOVERS AS MANIFESTATIONS OF POPULAR WILL IMPLEMENTED THROUGH "DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS". CDE AT VILA REAL HAS ALLEGED MAGALHAES MOTA SEEKING TO BENEFIT HIS PARTY THROUGH MISUSE OF AUTHORITY; MINISTER HAS INVITED CDE SPOKESMEN TO REVEAL WHAT PARTY THEY BELONG TO. PPD RELEASED COMMUNIQUE JUNE 18 BLASTING CDE TAKEOVERS AS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC, "FASCIST" MANEUVERS AND URGED MINISTER TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT CDE DESIGNATED OFFICIALS.

4. COMMENT: CONTROL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS A BIG PRIZE IN PRESENT POWER STRUGGLE. VOTING RECORDS, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD PROVIDE BENEFICIARY PARTIES WITH ADDRESS LISTS OF SEVERAL MILLION PERSONS. TOWN COUNCILS CONTROL OFFICIAL PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SUBSTANTIAL BUDGETS. CDE IN MUCH OF PORTUGAL IS UNQUESTIONABLY COMMUNIST PARTY FRONT, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND PCP NOT IN FULL CONTROL IN ALL AREAS. CDE WOULD NOT, WE BELIEVE, CONTRAVENE PCP WISHES. LIKE SOME OTHER OBSERVERS HERE, WE CONCLUDE THAT PCP'S EARLY MAY STATEMENT AGAINST TAKE-OVERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IS DEAD LETTER. IF, AS WE BELIEVE, PCP IS MOVING FORCE BEHIND ARBITRARY MANEUVERS AIMED AT CAPTURING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, PARTY IS ON COLLISION COURSE WITH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. SCOTT

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